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INFORMATION REPORT
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COUNTRY Korea

SUBJECT Salvage Activities at Chongjin and Wajin

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1. In the last stages of the Pacific war, more than twenty large and small vessels were sunk by bombing in Chongjin (129-49, 41-46) and Najin (130-15, 42-10) harbors, mostly close to the entrance. In June 1947, Korean stevedores and other local workers who had witnessed the sinking of the craft obtained permission from the provincial People's Committee for salvage and recovered about three million won in cash. This sum was, however, confiscated by Soviet naval authorities in the area and used to purchase Korean materials. Also during 1947, Koreans salvaged several thousand sok (a unit of capacity equivalent to about 40 gallons) of soy beans and kaoliang from the vessels at Najin.
2. In 1948, a Korean Salvaging Company was organized under CHON Ch'ang-kun (金昌根), who later became an employee of the Ministry of Productive Enterprises in Pyongyang. After the company had salvaged large amounts of grain and other materials, it was ordered dissolved by Soviet military authorities and its work was transferred to Soviet hands.
3. The Soviet Navy undertook the raising of the sunken vessels, working with empty drums and large cranes. They succeeded after seven months in refloating one vessel and later raised a second craft; others are still being worked on. The raised vessels are being repaired in the Chongjin Shipbuilding Yard under the supervision of Soviet technicians, with the cooperation of the North Korean navy. When they are in condition, the vessels will be turned over to the Chongjin unit of the First Battalion of the Wonsan First Naval Squadron.

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

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